

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-25. (canceled)

26.(new) Process for indexing a preform (1) provided with at least one hooking lug (2) projecting outwardly from the body of said preform during a process of production of a container, for example of polyester resin, from said preform (1), comprising essentially a step of heating said preform (1) before the principal step of blowing or blow-drawing of said preform (1) during which said preform (1) is moved on a transport support permitting its rotation about its longitudinal axis, and in which, between said step of heating said preform (1) and the step of blowing or blow-drawing said preform (1), the rotation of this latter is mechanically blocked on its transport support in a precise angular position of at least one hooking lug (2), said angular position of the hooking lug (2) after blocking being determined as a function of a predetermined desired position of said hooking lug of said preform (1) after its transfer by means of a transfer gripper (210) into the blowing or blow-drawing mold (300) and characterized in that the orientation of at least one hooking lug (2) of said preform (1) relative to said transfer gripper (210) during said transfer toward the blowing or blow-drawing mold (300) is modified by rotation of the preform about its longitudinal axis when it is gripped in said transfer gripper (210) by a means (200) for limited driving in rotation of a preform (1) in the form of a movable abutment associated with said gripper (210) and adapted to come to bear against at least

one of said lugs (2) so as to give rise to the rotation of said preform (1).

27.(new) Process according to claim 26, characterized in that the hooking lug or lugs (2) are in the form of pieces whose portion connected to said preform (1) has a reduced cross-section relative to the retaining means forming the free end of said lug (2).

28.(new) Process according to claim 26, characterized in that two hooking lugs (2) are present on the neck of said preform (1).

29) (new) Process according to claim 26, characterized in that said preform (1) comprises two diametrically opposed hooking lugs (2) forming a single piece with said preform.

30. (new) Process according to claim 26, characterized in that the hooking lug or lugs (2) have substantially a flat elongated shape in the form of a bean with two rounded ends lying on circles.

31. (new) Process according to claim 26, characterized in that it consists, at the end of the process of production, in providing the formed container with a gripping and/or transport means belonging to or coming into engagement with the hooking lug or lugs (2).

32. (new) Indexing station for the practice of the process according to claim 26, comprising principally a mechanical blocking means (100) adapted mechanically to block the rotation of said preform (1) after said heating step, said mechanical blocking means (100) comprising a means (112) for immobilizing said at least one hooking lug (2) projecting outwardly of the body of said preform (1), which is subject to the conjoint

actions of a means for driving in translation and means (120) for driving in rotation, said immobilization means (112) being adapted to hold said lug (2) in a substantially fixed position whilst said preform (1) continues to move in the direction of driving in translation while turning about its axis (X) so as to carry out substantially a pivoting relative to said lug, independently of the means (120) for driving in rotation and said immobilization means (112) being adapted to free said lug (2) when the latter is in said precise angular position.

33. (new) Station according to claim 32, characterized in that said means (120) for driving in rotation is deactivated, for a given preform (1), in a position of said preform in which a lug (2) of said preform is necessarily located immobilized in said immobilization means (112).

34. (new) Station according to claim 32, characterized in that said mechanical blocking means (100) is in the form of a rigid cam (110) against the surface of which a hooking lug (2) comes to bear.

35. (new) Station according to claim 34, characterized in that said rigid cam (110) comprises a first flat surface (111) against which comes to bear a hooking lug (2) of a preform (1) subject to the conjugated actions of a means for driving in translation and a means (120) for driving in rotation, said flat surfaces can be parallel to the direction of drive in translation (T) such that said preform (1) is immobilized in rotation whilst remaining free to translate.

36. (new) Station according to claim 34, characterized in that said rigid cam (110) comprises a retracted surface (112) forming a hollow adapted to receive a hooking lug (2) of a preform (1) so as to form an immobilization means adapted to hold said lug in a

substantially fixed position whilst said preform continues to move in a direction of drive in translation (T) by turning about its axis (X) in a manner substantially to pivot relative to said lug.

37. (new) Station according to claim 36, characterized in that said retracted surface (112) comprises a shoulder (113) against which a lug (2) of a preform (1) can bear so as to immobilize said lug until said preform will no longer be subject to the action of a means for driving in rotation.

38. (new) Station according to claim 36, characterized in that said retracted surface (112) comprises a slope (114) inclined relative to the direction of driving in translation (T), said lug (2) being located in said hollow or reinforcement formed by said retracted surface (112) coming to bear against said inclined slope (114) until said lug (2) is in said precise angular position.

39. (new) Station according to claim 35, characterized in that said rigid cam (110) comprises a second flat surface (115) against which a hooking lug (2) of a first preform (1) comes to bear in said precise angular position, said second flat surface (115) extending parallel to the direction of driving in translation (T) such that said preform is immobilized in rotation whilst remaining free in translation.

40. (new) Station according to claim 39, characterized in that said retracted surface (112) is located between said first (111) and second (115) flat surfaces, said retracted surface being disposed facing a zone (122) in which the drive means in rotation (120) of the preforms (1) is deactivated.

41. (new) Station according to claim 39, characterized in that said second flat surface (115) is offset laterally outwardly relative to said first flat surface (111).

42. (new) Station according to claim 32, characterized in that the means (120) for guiding in rotation of the preforms (1) is an endless chain (121) whose drive portion circulates parallel to a direction of drive in translation (T) of said preforms (1) at a speed greater than the speed of driving in translation of said preforms, said endless chain being in engagement with toothed wheels for driving in rotation support means for the preforms so as to give rise to the rotation about their axes (X) of said preforms (1).

43. (new) Station according to claim 42, characterized in that the zone in which the means (120) for driving in rotation of the preforms (1) is deactivated corresponds to a toothed wheel (122) for changing the direction of said endless chain (121).

44. (new) Indexing device for practicing a process according to claim 26 in cooperation with an indexing station, characterized in that it comprises essentially a means (200) for driving in limited rotation a preform (1) when this latter is gripped in said transfer gripper (210), said means for driving in rotation being in the form of a movable abutment associated with said gripper (210) and adapted to come to bear against at least one of said lugs (2) so as to give rise to the rotation of said preform (1).

45. (new) Device according to claim 44, characterized in that said movable abutment (200) has a U shaped structure and comprises two arms (201, 202) of different lengths adapted to come to bear against two diametrically opposed lugs (2A, 2B) when said preform (1) is in a predetermined angular position, one or the other arm

coming to bear against the corresponding lug to drive in rotation said preform (1) in said predetermined precise angular position in the cases in which said preform is spaced from this position in one or the other directions, respectively.

46. (new) Installation for the production of containers by blowing or blow-drawing of preforms, characterized in that it comprises an indexing station according to claim 32.